

STRAIGHT TALK WITH BROTHER JAMES

Part 2

The Mathematics of Trials

James 1:2-8

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Trials} &= \text{Joy} \\ (\text{Trust} + \text{Steadfastness} + \text{Wisdom}) &= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \\ \text{Trials} + \underline{\hspace{2cm}} &= \text{Joy} \end{aligned}$$

'Count' * = add it up

'Joy' = satisfaction that God is in this

'You meet' = Fall into something that's all around you

'Trials of various kinds' = Adversities that have a variation
of **sources** and **intensities**

'Testing of your faith' = Test of progress, genuineness

'Steadfastness' = Cheerfully standing firm

'Let it have its full effect' * = Complete impact

'Perfect and complete' = Maturity, entirely sound

'Lacking in nothing' = Nothing absent

'Ask for wisdom' * = Biblical Insights, Spiritual skills

There is not a single issue in life that the Bible does not address!

'with no doubting' *; **'double-minded'** = to Hesitate, to vacillate, to Withdraw

* = imperatives, commands

Auburn Grace Community Church. January 12th, 2025

Life Group Discussion Questions – January 12, 2025

James 1:2-4 *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (ESV)*

DISCOVER

1. What are the warning signs that you are being enticed to handle a tough situation on your own terms? What will you do to break this inclination?
2. What satisfaction do you draw from knowing God is in trials with you? The ministry of Jesus was filled with trials. Recount some of the trials that Jesus endured and the good that came about as a result.

James' teaching, presented by Phil as a mathematical equation, was TRIALS + (TRUST + STEADFASTNESS + WISDOM) = JOY which when simplified is TRIALS + MATURITY = JOY

3. Define TRUST. What evidence should be expected if we are trusting in God? How should the evidence extend beyond emotion or feeling?
4. Define STEADFASTNESS. How can it be possible to endure trials with a joyful heart? When have you been a joyful child of God during hard times? What growth came about as a result? If we take an escape route to avoid a difficult path, how might that impact our relationship with others, with God, and our faith journey?
5. Define WISDOM. Read James 3:13-18. Where do you turn for wise counsel? We may get input, solicited or not, from friends, culture, and social media telling us how to handle life's trials. Compare and contrast worldly advice with God's wisdom from scripture. What dangers are there in combining worldly advice with God's wisdom?

EXPLORE

1. Read Genesis 22:1-19. Using the story of Abraham and Isaac from Genesis 22, identify each element from the equation above. How was God's plan fulfilled through the testing of Abraham?
2. Read James 1:2-8. Does James view hardships as an idealist or a realist? Explain. What wisdom is needed in those times? In receiving wisdom, is doubt ever to be expressed? Why or why not?
3. In v. 4, James says that we should let endurance have its perfect result or "complete impact." How do we know when we've reached completion in this regard? Does letting endurance have its full effect mean that this is a hands-off scenario? Explain.

EXPERIENCE

1. What are some measurements of progress being made in your spiritual maturity? How do you know you are headed in the right direction?
2. Job 36:15 says, "God rescues the afflicted in their misery and opens their ears in time of oppression." How might you rate yourself in agreement with this truth? If God is not getting your attention during adversity, why not?

PRAY

Father God, You told us we could come to You for wisdom. Your very words give us wisdom. Boldly we ask for our trust to be increased giving us steadfastness as we grow in maturity so that our joy may be made complete. Forgive our lack of faith in Your plan to equip and use us as a reflection of Your glory. May Your will be done. Amen.